



## State of New Jersey

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES**  
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
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To: Health Officers and West Nile Virus (WNV) Surveillance Partners  
From: Shereen Semple  
Vector-borne Disease Coordinator  
Infectious & Zoonotic Disease Program  
Date: April 9, 2008  
Subject: Bird Testing for WNV Surveillance

The 2008 WNV season is approaching. As in previous years, we need to continue surveillance efforts to ensure the safety and protection of our residents. The following are some bird testing reminders and general information to enhance communication and reporting during the upcoming season.

### **Bird Testing and Reporting**

The Vector-borne Disease Working Group recommended bird testing to begin as usual in mid April. We will continue to expand bird testing to the entire corvid family. The most common corvids found in NJ are crows and blue jays. Other non-corvid species, such as raptors (e.g., hawks) and thrushes (e.g., robins), will be considered for testing on a case-by-case basis. Additional information on corvid species, including pictures, can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.montereybay.com/creagrus/corvids.html>  
<http://www.shades-of-night.com/aviary/corvidae.html>

We will start bird testing at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEL) on **April 15, 2008** and will continue accepting birds until the WNV season ends in late October. As in previous years, the policy of limiting testing at PHEL to five (5) positive birds per municipality will remain in effect. However, birds from **new areas** within a large municipality may still be submitted for testing even after the large municipality has reached its five positive bird limit; please indicate on the Dead/III Bird Report/Lab Submission form that the specimen is from a "**New Area**".

Dead/III Bird Report/Lab Submission forms for birds not submitted for testing at PHEL still need to be entered into the WNV surveillance system as bird reports, or sent to NJDHSS via fax at 609-588-2546. These are reported as "**sightings**". These data are crucial to enable prompt mosquito control and surveillance efforts on the local level, as dead birds are excellent early indicators of WNV activity in a locale.

Please continue to use the existing [Dead/III Bird Report/Lab Submission form](#) for all bird sightings and birds submitted for testing at PHEL.

Remember to advise residents to use gloves while handling any wildlife, including dead corvids. If residents have questions regarding avian influenza and handling dead birds, please refer them to the guidelines posted on the state health website at <http://nj.gov/health/er/avianflu.shtml>, especially the document [Public Reports of Bird Mortality: Guidance for Health Officers](#).

## **Positive Bird Notifications**

As in previous years, we will continue to send weekly LINCS messages and postings to the NJDHSS WNV website listing WNV positive birds and mosquito pools. However, in the beginning of the season, these updates will be sent only when positive birds and mosquito pools are reported.

## **Courier Service**

Currently, PHEL is providing limited courier service for bird specimen delivery. Below is a list of locations currently served by the PHEL courier. It is advised that you contact the courier location to confirm pick-up times **prior** to dropping off a bird specimen for delivery to PHEL. There will be **no** supplemental courier service provided by Rutgers University for WNV specimens this season.

For those dropping off samples themselves, please note there is a single point access for specimen delivery to the laboratory at the loading dock entrance, after clearance by the security booth. The Greenhouse entrance will no longer be open. The security office at the loading dock will now serve as the final security clearance for all specimen delivery. There will be assigned, posted parking for sample delivery vehicles in the loading dock area. **SPECIMEN DELIVERY HOURS WILL BE 8:30 AM TO 4 PM.**

County	Name	City	Address	Phone	Pick-up Days
<b>Camden</b>	Camden County HD	East Camden	2631 Federal St	856-756-2265	M, W, F
<b>Cumberland</b>	Cumberland County HD	Bridgeton	790 E. Commerce St	856-453-2160	M, W
<b>Essex</b>	East Orange HD	Est Orange	143 New St	973-266-5397	T, Th
<b>Essex</b>	Newark HD	Newark	110 William St	973-648-2474	M-F
<b>Gloucester</b>	Gloucester County HD	Sewell	204 E. Holly Ave	856-218-4183	W, F
<b>Middlesex</b>	Middlesex County HD	New Brunswick	596 Jersey Ave, Suite B	732-745-3157	M, W, F
<b>Morris</b>	Morristown Hospital	Morristown	Floor D Lab	973-971-5280	W, F
<b>Ocean</b>	Ocean County HD	Toms River	175 Sunset Ave	732-341-9700	T, Th
<b>Salem</b>	Salem County HD	Salem	98 Market St	856-935-7510	M, W
<b>Union</b>	Elizabeth City Hall	Elizabeth	Ground Floor, Rm G-1	908-820-4256	M, W, F
<b>Union</b>	Plainfield HD	Plainfield	510 Watchung Ave	908-753-3582	T, F

## **Instructions for bird submissions**

- Pack birds in clear Ziploc bags with a completed [Dead/III Bird Report/Lab Submission form](#).
- As all counties are generating their own USIs, please make sure you write the USI with a waterproof marker on the bird bag so that the bird can be traced even if the form is lost.
- All 2008 USIs start with 'A08' (see picture below).
- Refrigerate bird – **do not freeze**.
- Only use ice packs (not dry ice) for packing. **Do not put the ice directly in the bird bag**, or the bird will be soggy and unsuitable for testing.
- Before submitting, open mouth to check for maggots (even refrigerated birds can develop maggots). **Do not submit birds with maggots**.
- Remember to always wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including puncture resistant gloves, while handling and packaging dead birds.

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The above guidelines, forms and other information about WNV can be found on the NJDHSS WNV website at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/enceph.htm>. In addition, if you have any questions about WNV surveillance in New Jersey, please do not hesitate to contact me at (609) 588-7500 or [shereen.semple@doh.state.nj.us](mailto:shereen.semple@doh.state.nj.us).

Thanks again for your cooperation and I look forward to working with you in the upcoming months.